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● 496
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Lebanon ME1

For information on the topography, climate, agriculture, mineral wealth, railways, settlement pattern, productive capacity of the economy, and trade of the Levant coastland, see M1 Middle East, cat. 116, 21: Fisher, pp. 371-414.]

3:Royal Institute of International Affairs U-4 (no date)1954 M1 Middle East
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refinery is running on imported crude oil at about a quarter of its capacity. There exists an IPC refinery at Tripoli which treats over half a million tons of crude a year (10,000 barrels a day) for the needs of Syria and Lebanon which it cannot fully supply; accordingly, its extension has been under discussion. Construction has begun on a refinery for 7,000 barrels a day at Sidon for Mediterranean Refining Company (California Texas Corporation), but while the Syrian market is still too small to justify the erection of a refinery, the Syrian Government nevertheless wishes to have a refinery established in the country to meet its own needs, and negotiations to this end with IPC and with the World Bank have recently taken place.[1]

Under the Barcelona Convention of 1921 dues are not leviable on transit trade, but the two countries draw, under their agreements with the pipeline companies, a sizable revenue from petroleum apart from the indirect benefits caused by employment by the oil companies. At the time of writing the agreements between the two Governments and the two oil companies are under review but no precise details are available, though the two Governments began by demanding that they should receive jointly a half share of the saving which the companies made by using the pipelines instead of having to transport their oil to the Mediterranean by tanker. Even if this principle were accepted, the difficulty would remain of establishing a satisfactory formula for calculating the saving. The agreement with Tapline is believed to provide Lebanon with about £L4½ million a year. The oil companies bring foreign exchange into Syria and the Lebanon and the currency is surrendered to the Governments at the official rate but can thereafter be resold at the rate applying to the free market which may bring to the Governments a profit of a third. The problem is that Syria and Lebanon are, in fact, not oil-producing states and, although their needs and desires for foreign money may be as great as Iraq's, it is difficult to see how they can expect to obtain from petroleum the same revenue as do the states where it is produced.

Communications

In general, roads provide a cheaper and quicker means of transport than the railways which are mostly running at a loss. The railway lines are:

The Hejaz Railway. A narrow (3 ft 5 in.) gauge track runs from the centre of Damascus to Deraa (88 miles) and thence

[1] See *Petroleum Press Service*, February 1953, p. 58.

3:Royal Institute of International Affairs U-4 (no date)1954 M1 Middle East
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into Jordan. There is a branch line from Deraa to Suwaida, but another branch, to Haifa, is out of use.

Damas-Hama et Prolongements. (*a*) From Beirut to Damascus there is a narrow-gauge track running for 91 miles via Rayaq; rack and pinion are used to traverse the mountains, and this slow haul is now employed for freight only. (*b*) From Rayaq to Aleppo there is a 4 ft 8 in. gauge track for 270 miles which passes through Homs and Hama. (*c*) The stretch of the Cairo–Turkey line from Ras an-Naqura on the Lebano–Israel border to Beirut is out of commission but the section of 64 miles in standard gauge from Beirut to Tripoli and Homs is used.

Syrian state Railways. This is the part (164 miles) of the Turkey–Mosul line that runs inside Syrian territory.

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Roads

Main arterial roads in Lebanon are considered adequate, but the network of secondary and feeder roads is poor. In Syria the road system is generally inadequate, and only the asphalted roads are usable for heavy trafic throughout the year. The following figures give some indication of the position:

Syria, 1951	Miles	Lebanon, 1949	Miles
1st class, asphalted	2,917	Surfaced	1,811
2nd class, macadamized	1,268	Unimproved	414
Tracks	5,218		

(Sources: *Statesman's Year-Book*, 1953; US Dept. of Commerce.)

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There are over 11,000 vehicles registered in Syria. Trans-desert passenger and goods services to Iraq are in regular use and goods are also moved, including refrigerated vegetables, to Kuwait and Dahran. The authorities are restricting the registration of new lorries to the estimated needs of the countries, but more vehicles are required, particularly diesel lorries for long hauls of heavy loads.

S L 509

Aerodromes. The new airport of Beirut (Khaldeh) receives the Comet, and is beginning to rival Cairo as a gateway to the East, and that of Damascus (Mezzeh) has long been in use by Constellations. Many international airlines stage at Khaldeh or Mezzeh; the approach to Khaldeh is better and, with between twenty and thirty aircraft a day it has since 1951 outstripped Mezzeh, which has five to ten aircraft a day. For some years plans have been under consideration for moving the Damascus airport to the east of the city. There are two private Lebanese airlines. A national airline in Syria was a financial failure and was taken over by the army. Smaller airfields exist near Tripoli,

7: Gulick E-5 (1952) 1955 ME1 Lebanon ME1

(Fisher, 1950, p. 50). From May through October, there is no precipitation at all, except at the beginning and the end of the period.

Along the coast, up to about 1500 feet at least, freezing temperatures in winter are of very rare occurrence, but snow covers the higher slopes continuously during the winter. Patches of it on the summits even defy the broiling sun of August.

At Beirut the average summer temperature is 82°F., and it is frequently oppressively humid (Fisher, 1950, p. 42). In al-Qurni, as in Beirut, there is no snow in winter, but the district is somewhat cooler and less humid than the city in summer.

Lebanon, as a whole, is obviously a well-watered country, but its geological structure has led to an over-abundance of water in some districts and a dearth of it in others. Mt. Lebanon consists, essentially, of two thick layers of Jurassic and Cretaceous limestone, interspersed with a layer of sands and clays. Rain water and snow-melt either run off directly or sink through permeable upper strata to emerge as springs at lower levels, especially at between 3000 and 5000 feet, where their downward seepage is blocked by impermeable strata below (Fisher, 1950, p. 374). The abundance of spring water in high mountain fastnesses is the primary reason for Lebanon's having been so popular as a refuge area for sect groups escaping from persecution.

The drainage system of the country is clearly seen on the map of Lebanon (Fig. 1). The eastern slopes are drained by the large rivers, Litani and Orontes. The western slopes are drained by a series of small rivers whose courses drop from 5000 to 4000 feet to sea level in distances rarely exceeding fifteen miles. The erosion pattern is what one might expect. The small rivers have cut very steep, high banks, nothing less than deep gorges in many cases. Culturally, this is important for at least three reasons: The gorges have made north-south travel very difficult. It has been impossible to use river water for extensive irrigation except, in very recent years, near the mouths of the rivers. The spectacular scenery has added inspiration to the love of the Lebanese for their country, and it attracts many foreign tourists every summer. Water erosion has also created innumerable caves (used both by Stone Age man and latter-day troglodites), a large natural bridge, and at least one horrendous underground river (reputed to be the original River Styx) which has not yet been fully explored.

Although the lower slopes are not, as a whole, entirely devoid of springs, and although what bottomland there is is fully exploited, there are districts which have no springs, no local streams, and no alluvial soil. One such district is al-Qurni. This district is located about halfway between the large urban centers of Beirut and Tripoli, and the main highway and only railroad between these cities pass through it. This route has been used ever since the advent of man in the area, but the present paved highway dates from about 1920, while the railroad was built by the British army in 1942. Also of very recent date are the automobile roads within the district. The road from Be'ishta to Ghazzeir is paved, and has been

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T U R K
HATAY
A L E P P O
E U P H
HAMA
H O M S
D A M A S C U S
TRANSJORDA

END MAP (0)

CARTE DU LIBAN

NORD

KAA

MONT LIBAN
LIBEK

LIBAN SUD

Communications are excellent in the coastal districts, but some parts of the interior are inaccessible, especially during the winter months, when snow accumulates on the mountain ridges. Good roads stretch north and south along the coast and in the Bekaa, but the lateral connections are restricted by the nature of the terrain and the shortage of suitable natural passes across the mountains. Trunk highways skirt the coast and extend from Beirut to Damascus, linking Lebanon and Syria. Beirut is also united with Damascus by a railway through Rayak, while a line from Rayak through Homs joins the Istanbul-Baghdad railway at Aleppo. Tripoli is linked with the latter system by a branch from Homs. A coastal railroad, extending from Tripoli to Haifa, was constructed by the British military forces during World War II, and the Lebanese portion is still in operation. Beirut, the principal modern port, handles a large volume of transit traffic for Syria, Jordan, Iraq and other parts of the Middle East. Tripoli is a port of secondary significance, except as an oil-shipping center. The ancient port of Sidon has recently been developed as the terminus of the trans-Arabian pipeline, serving as a Mediterranean port for the shipment of oil from the Saudi Arabian fields of the Arabian American Oil Company. The distances between local points are too short for the promotion of internal air services, but Beirut is an important junction for international airlines serving Europe and the Near and the Far East.

Food and Nutrition

The nutritional standards of the people differ according to the prosperity and the familiarity with food values of the individual families, but they are reasonably high in most parts of the country. Breads and a coarse-grained cereal known as *burghul*, which are usually prepared from wheat but sometimes from barley or millet, are staple foods in both urban and rural areas. Rice is popular among all groups of the population. Liberal amounts of milk are consumed